



DATE: June 4, 2025

TO: Chabot-Las Positas Community College District

FROM: Chancellor Ronald P. Gerhard, CLPCCD
President Jamal Cooks, Chabot College
President Dyrell Foster, Las Positas College

SUBJECT: CLPCCD Communication – Key Federal Developments

We write to share several important federal developments that may have implications for California Community Colleges and the students we serve. These updates stem from recent policy proposals and administrative actions under consideration in Washington, D.C.

► **Proposed Cuts to Pell Grants**

The Trump administration has released a proposal to reduce the maximum Pell Grant award by \$1,685—bringing it down from \$7,395 to \$5,710 for the 2026–27 academic year. While the administration maintains that overall program funding would remain flat, it cites concerns over broader student eligibility and award growth over time. Notably, congressional Republicans have offered an alternative approach: While proposing eligibility restrictions, they also support increasing Pell program funding by \$10.5 billion over three years. Any reduction to Pell undermines our mission to support low- and middle-income students and could significantly affect affordability and access for many in our communities.

► **TRIO Programs Face Cuts and Cancellations**

The U.S. Department of Education recently canceled at least three Upward Bound projects just before their scheduled June 1 start date, stating that the college-prep services they provide are an “inappropriate use of federal funds.” The Council for Opportunity in Education warns that more cancellations may be imminent. TRIO programs—including Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Student Support Services—have been instrumental in supporting first-generation, low-income, and disabled students. The potential loss of these services would be a substantial blow to equitable educational opportunity and support structures that many of our students depend on.

► **Increased Federal Scrutiny of Higher Education Institutions**

Multiple federal agencies are reportedly exploring punitive actions against universities, most notably Harvard, related to campus protests, DEIA practices, and admissions policies. Some options under review include cutting federal funding or revoking access to programs like the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP). We join our colleagues from across the nation expressing concern about the potential for heightened scrutiny and politicization of institutional governance and academic freedom.

► **Federal Targeting of LGBTQ+ Programs in California Community Colleges**

The Trump administration's proposed budget for the 2026 fiscal year includes over \$10 billion in education spending cuts. Some of those cuts explicitly target San Diego Community College District's LGBTQ+ pride centers. These centers, which received federal grants to support LGBTQ+ students through initiatives like the "Lavender Celebration," have been singled out as "initiatives unrelated to students or institutional reforms." The administration's stance has prompted concerns about the future of such programs and their essential role in fostering inclusive campus environments.

► **Escalating Federal Actions Against International Students**

A wave of aggressive new federal policies is significantly affecting international students in the U.S., with potential ripple effects for institutions across all sectors, including community colleges. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Department of Homeland Security have recently expanded their authority to terminate students' legal status for vague or minor infractions. A new State Department policy has halted all new visa interviews while a stringent social media screening process is rolled out, jeopardizing students' ability to arrive in time for the fall term. Chinese students, who represent nearly a quarter of the total international student population in the U.S., are being disproportionately targeted under a policy framed as a national security precaution. Collectively, these developments threaten to depress international enrollment, disrupt student success, and destabilize the tuition revenue and diversity that international students bring to American colleges.

What This Means for Us

Taken together, these developments underscore a federal policy climate that is increasingly hostile to higher education institutions, particularly those advancing access, equity, and inclusion. As always, we will continue to monitor legislative proposals and administrative actions closely. In the meantime, it remains critical that we collectively advocate for federal support of community colleges and the students who rely on programs like Pell Grants and TRIO to achieve their educational goals.

Stay updated on staff and student communications by visiting www.clpccd.org/communications.